

## **Bethel United 5 vs 2 116 Exiles**

Bethel were looking for their first victory at their new home ground after 4 consecutive league draws so far this season.

Manager Greg Lyford was forced to make 3 changes from the side which defeated Henley Town in the Div 1 cup the previous weekend with Adrian Vaughan, Dominic Atherley-Smith and Danny Lynch replacing Ben Haines, Siarhei Bahdanovich and Sean D'oliveira respectively.

Team in full: (right to left 4-2-3-1) Anthony Roach, Paul 'Torres' Alexander, Adrian 'H' Hudson, Michael Haynes, Jack Bowyer, Stuart Newton (C), Dominic Atherley-Smith, Adrian Vaughan, Daniel Evans, Mark Montgomery, Danny Lynch

Subs: Kevan Tamplin, Mashelle Kawishe, Greg Lyford

Lineman: Abubacarr Mboge

The away side started brightly with their pacey, skilful front man and left winger in particular causing problems for the United rear guard.

However, Bethel also showed glimpses of their pace and ability in the final third and managed to take the lead inside the first 10 minutes.

**1 – 0** – The ball was played in the Exiles box and as they frantically attempted to clear their lines, the ball popped up to Danny Lynch who nodded the ball down for Adrian Vaughan who fiercely struck an unstoppable, left footed effort high past the diving goalkeeper. Great Finish!

**1 – 1** – Exiles kept their heads up, continued to push forward and were rewarded after a long throw into the Bethel penalty area fell invitingly to be struck by their onrushing player. After a decent stop by Anthony roach in goal, the ball rebounded kindly for another Exiles player to finish well from 12 yards under challenge from Paul ‘Torres’ Alexander .

Both teams knew they were in a tough contest with strong challenges and 100% commitment from both sets of players. Dominic Atherley-Smith in particular seemed determined to do all he could to ensure his team were not brushed aside as he battled and tussled with Exile players all around the park galloping through 2 or 3 tackles on a couple of occasions.

**1 – 2** – However, it was the away team who made their pressure tell by taking the lead. The ball was played into the United 18 yard box but as the ball bounced, Adrian ‘H’ Hudson hesitated with his clearance as the ball wouldn’t come down for him to hook clear, allowing the pacy forward to nip in and blast home from around the penalty spot.

**2 – 2** – Bethel hit back within 10mins as more determined play from Atherley-Smith in the centre circle allowed him to keep the ball under 2 strong challenges and release the ball to midfield partner and Captain Stuart Newton who attempted to play the ball forward to Lynch. Although the pass was intercepted by the defender, Vaughan was on hand to poke the ball through to Lynch who sprinted clear only to be brought crashing to the ground by the goalkeeper – a stone wall penalty!

Daniel Evans stepped up to calmly slot home is 3<sup>rd</sup> goal in 3 games on Sundays.

The home side were now taking the game by the scruff of the neck as they begun to get more of their attacking players on the front foot more and more frequently. In form Montgomery cut inside from the left-hand side but fired straight at the goalkeeper, Newton had his goal-bound shot blocked more through luck than judgment after a neat turn inside the area and full back Alexander was getting to the byline and putting in some teasing crosses for his team-mates.

They were still having to defend at times though, Mikey Haynes twisted his neck a body expertly to get something on a beautifully whipped freekick from Exiles which was sure to cause problems, and Jack Bowyer had to be strong and show his quality on a few occasions to ensure he was not beaten on the counter attack.

**3 -2** - Bethel finally got the goal their good play deserved after some fantastic skill and pace from Lynch allowed him to race clear of the backline and pull the ball back to the supporting Atherley-Smith who in turn teed up Daniel Evans at the back-post to prod the ball home.

## **Half Time**

The home side began the 2<sup>nd</sup> half as they finished the 1<sup>st</sup> and should have extended their lead within 10 minutes of the re-start after Atherley-Smith's cross deep to the backpost was headed down by Newton and past the goalkeeper.

Although the ball didn't hit the back of the net before being cleared by the covering defender, it had clearly crossed the line but the referee waved play on much to the frustration of the United players and supporters.

With the United centre back pairing of Haynes and Hudson

now fully in control of the tricky Exiles front men, Bethel were continuously on the front foot attempting to put the game bed.

**4 – 2** - They finally got the goal they deserved and what a team goal it was!

It all started with a thrown in the final third which was neatly cushioned back to Montgomery by Lynch. Montgomery in turn laid the ball back to left back Bowyer who kept the ball moving into midfield onto Captain Stuart Newton. Newton then found his midfield partner Atherley-Smith slightly advanced who swept the ball first time out to the right-hand side of the field to find substitute Mashelle Kawishe in space. The ball was simply laid back to his supporting full-back Alexander who took one touch before delivering the perfect cross into the centre of the penalty area for Evans to power a header home and complete his hat-trick!

With some of the tension now out of their game, the home side really pushed on playing some great football with Kawishe and Lynch in particular causing a number of problems with their pace and trickery supplying plenty of dangerous crosses into the box and shots at goal.

Manager Gregg Lyford then decided to substitute Evans and replace him with Kevan Tamplin for some extra aggression in the final third to close the game off.

**5 – 2** – That aggression was clearly evident for the fifth and final goal after more good work down the right from Kawishe supplied Tamplin with the opportunity to wrap the game up. Although the cross probably slightly favoured the defender, Tamplin used all of his effort to get to the ball first and prod the ball past the helpless goalkeeper.

His celebration cleared showed what it meant to him!

## **Full Time**

An explosive first half of football with plenty of quality from both sides. However, after 4 draws this season it was clear to see that United wanted and needed the points that bit more as they squeezed more and more life out of their opponent allowing them to take full control of the game for the final third.

MoM – Danny Lynch – was involved heavily in 3 goals and was a constant threat to the Exiles back line. Calm throughout with no attitude to the ref, his team mates and especially himself, enabled Danny to really showcase his growing maturity and limitless ability.

A mention must also go to a brilliant all round performance from Dominic Atherly-Smith as he won headers and tackles, made interceptions, created goals and drove his team forward in general. The only blip once again was his constant disagreements with the referee which he voiced too often and was extremely lucky not to be booked again but has cost him the MoM award.